

## WA Coastal Dungeness Crab Pot/Trap Fishery

**Fishing gear type:** Trap/Pot

**Current category:** Category II\*

**Basis for current classification on LOF:** The mean annual mortality and serious injury of humpback whales (CA/OR/WA stock) is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level. The mean annual mortality and serious injury is 0.2 animals/year, or 1.7% of the stock's PBR (PBR=11.3).

**Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a <sup>(1)</sup> indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification):** Gray whale, Eastern North Pacific; Humpback whale, CA/OR/WA <sup>(1)</sup>.

**Estimated number of current participants:** 228

**Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery:** None.

**Year added to the LOF:** 1996

**Category when originally listed:** Category III

**Basis for original classification on the LOF:** Listed as Category III because there was no observer, logbook, or stranding data available.

**Estimated number of participants when originally listed:** 1,475

**Past names, if any:** WA Dungeness crab pot/trap (until 2011); WA/OR/CA crab pot (until 2009).

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**Gear description/method for fishing:** The pots are fished individually and must be marked with an identification number. Surface marker buoys must also be tagged for identification.

**Target species:** Dungeness crab.

**Spatial/temporal distribution of effort:** This fishery operates along the coastal waters off WA from the Columbia River estuary to Cape Flattery, including Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay. The fishery opens on or about December 1 when the majority of male crabs have recovered from the fall molt and shell condition has hardened. The season runs through September 15.

**Levels of observer coverage each year<sup>†</sup>:** There has not been observer coverage in this fishery.

**Management and regulations:** The coastal crab fishery is a limited entry fishery. Each coastal crab license is assigned a maximum pot limit of either 300 or 500 pots. In 1997 Congress granted WA, OR and CA jurisdiction to manage Dungeness crab fisheries outside of state waters to the 200 mile limit of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Under WA state regulations, pots can be no larger than 13 cubic feet and must be equipped with specified escape rings for undersize crab and a biodegradable release mechanism to allow crabs to escape from pots that become separated from the buoy or have otherwise become lost. There is a summer Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which is part of the larger WA Coastal Dungeness Crab FMP, in place to protect crabs that enter the molt prior to the September 15 season ending date. This summer FMP allows for in-season closures of the fishery if the percentage of early molting crab reaches a certain level.

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\* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

† Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Reports (SAR).

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## History of Changes on the LOF

### 2011 LOF:

- Split from the Category III “WA Dungeness crab pot/trap” fishery. The coastal and Puget Sound (retained as Category III) Dungeness crab trap/pot fisheries are managed under separate licensing programs and different management regimes. The State of WA already considers these as separate fisheries. More importantly, the migratory routes of humpback whales pass through the coastal waters off of the State of WA, but the migratory routes do not pass through Puget Sound. Individual humpback whales have been reported to occasionally enter Puget Sound, but NMFS has received no reports of these individuals interacting with or becoming entangled in Puget Sound Dungeness crab trap/pot gear.
- Elevated to Category II. A humpback whale (CA/OR/WA stock) was entangled and seriously injured in Dungeness crab pot/trap gear in WA state waters in 2008. This serious injury results in an average mortality and serious injury rate of 0.2 humpback whales per year, or 1.7% of the stock’s PBR of 11.3. There have been no reported humpback whale entanglements in crab fisheries in the inland waters of WA.
- This fishery has 228 participants.
- Added the following species/stocks to the list of species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in this fishery:
  - Humpback whales (WA/OR/CA stock): Based on a serious injury in 2008. A superscript “1” listed after this stock to indicate that takes of this stock are driving the classification of the fishery.
  - Gray whales (Eastern North Pacific stock): Entanglements of gray whales in trap and pot gear have been reported; however, NMFS had not yet determined which specific fisheries were involved. Gray whales were added to the list of species/stocks killed or injured in the Category III “WA/OR/CA crab pot” fishery (from which this fishery is split) in 2005 and retained on the list in the Category III “WA Dungeness crab pot” fishery in 2009; therefore, it also remains listed under this separate fishery. Data related to interactions with gray whales and the newly categorized Category II trap and pot fisheries will be reviewed and discussed in future LOFs.

*Changes on the LOF when the “WA Coastal Dungeness crab pot” fishery was included in the larger “WA Dungeness crab pot” fishery*

2009 LOF: Split from larger “WA/OR/CA crab pot” fishery when the fishery was split by state and listed separately as a Category III fishery. Each of these fisheries is managed and permitted by the individual states and each state has different regulations and regulatory capacity for their fishery. The WA portion of the fishery remained a Category III because humpback whale entanglements have not been attributed to gear in WA. Gray whales remain listed as injured or killed in this fishery because gray whales have been listed as injured or killed in this fishery on past LOFs.

*Changes on the LOF when the “WA Dungeness crab pot” fishery was included in the larger “WA/OR/CA crab pot” fishery*

2007 LOF: Added humpback whale (Eastern North Pacific) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on 14 sightings of humpback whales entangled in trap (11 cases) or pot (3 cases) gear between 2000 and 2005. Data was insufficient to warrant elevation to Category II for the 2007 LOF, but NMFS stated its intent to monitor trap/pot interactions with large whales on the west coast and revisit classification in future LOFs, if warranted.

2005 LOF: Added gray whales (Eastern North Pacific) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery because of an interaction documented by the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program and NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement.